



**Old Testament Reading – Jeremiah 17:5-10**  
**New Testament Reading – Ephesians 5:22-23**

**The Glorious Return of Christ**  
**“The Judgment Seat of Christ”**

**Revelation 19:1-10**

**Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor**

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, the Apostle Paul said, ***“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.”***

- Those who believed in the promise of a Messiah prior to Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection are called **Old Testament Saints** and will be resurrected when Jesus returns to earth again.

- Those who will believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord during the tribulation are called **Tribulation Saints** and will also be resurrected when Jesus comes to earth again.
- All those who have died, or will die, without receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will be resurrected to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennium.

However, those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord since the beginning of the Church Age (Acts 2), including those who have died and those who will be alive on that day, will soon be raptured from this earth.

- While the wrath of God is being poured out on all those who rejected Christ, and the world is being ruled by the Antichrist, Christians will be standing before the Judgement Seat of Christ.
- **2 Corinthians 5:10 – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**
- This event has nothing to do with our eternal salvation, for that was settled by our faith in the work of Christ on the cross, for on that day, our sins were forgiven, and we were assured of heaven.
- Salvation is by grace alone, through our faith alone, in Christ alone, and there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
- However, the Judgment Seat of Christ will determine the value of our lives and our works on earth and the venue of our work in heaven for all eternity.

1. **The Judgment Seat of Christ – Romans 14:10-12 – “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God: Each of us shall give account of himself to God.”**

- The term “Judgment Seat” comes from the Greek word “Bema,” an elevated platform where the judges for the sporting events sat and where the winners received their rewards and crowns.
- When we stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ, our souls will be laid bare before the Lord, and the value of our works will be judged by fire. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)
- We will be rewarded for the works we did during our days on the earth, or we will lose the rewards we could have earned had we lived according to God’s perfect will.
- That will be a time of great shame for many Christians as the Lord evaluates not only what we did or did not do but the motive of our hearts in doing it or not doing it.
- **James 1:12 – “Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord promised to those who love Him.”**

The New Testament describes five different crowns or heavenly rewards Christians may receive.

- **The Victor's crown** – 1 Cor. 9:25-27 – given to those who discipline themselves to focus only on things with the highest eternal value.
- **The Crown of Rejoicing** – 1 Thess. 2:19 – given to those who bring others to Christ; this is the soul-winners crown.
- **The Crown of Righteousness** – 2 Timothy 4:8 – given to those who long for heaven and to see the face of Jesus.
- **The Crown of Life** – Revelation 2:10 – given to those who maintain their love for Christ even while being persecuted.
- **The Crown of Glory** – 1 Peter 5:4 – given to those faithful shepherds, pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, and workers who answered the call to be spiritual leaders.

The Bible says believers will be judged and rewarded regarding:

- Their use of their talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts.
- How they treated other believers.
- How they used the money God entrusted to them.
- Their faithfulness to the Lord even while enduring suffering.
- How they used their positions of authority over others.
- Their faithfulness in evangelism and discipleship.
- Their faithfulness in studying and teaching God's Word.
- Their longing for, and their love for the Lord's return.

Just as the 24-elders bowed before the Lord, and worshipped Him, casting their crowns before Him, so will we, for we will recognize it was not our work for Christ that accomplished anything of eternal value, but rather His work through us.

## 2. **The Marriage of the Lamb** –

- **Revelation 19:7-8** – ***“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, His wife has made herself ready, and to her it has been granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”***
- **Revelation 19:9** – ***“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!”***
- The Marriage of the Lamb and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb are two different events that will occur at two different times, at two different places, and involve two different groups of people.

The Marriage of the Lamb will occur in heaven, after the Judgment Seat of Christ, but before the Lord's return.

- The ceremony will follow the four stages of a Jewish wedding:
  - **The betrothal** – God the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. John 15:16
  - **The acceptance** – when we received Jesus Christ as our Savior, we became “betrothed” to Him. Our ring was the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and our covenant of marriage was written in His Word. John 14:15-17
    - During this time, we are to keep ourselves pure through the daily washing of the Word.
    - We are to display our total submission to Christ by being veiled to the world, and the world veiled to us, and we are to be dressed, ready, and waiting for His call to “come forth!”
  - **The Building of the Wedding Chamber** – Jesus has been building our wedding chamber for 2,000 years. John 14:2-3
    - While the groom built the place where they would live, the bride began to make her wedding garments and collect the items they would need to make their house into a home.
  - **The wedding** –
    - Each time we “take communion,” we renew our covenant with the Lord to be His bride.
    - On that day, the Lord Jesus will remove the veil that has covered our spiritual sight, and for the first time, we will see everything through the eyes of Christ.
    - Just as we reserved ourselves as unto the Lord during our days on earth, so we will fully release ourselves unto Him on that day.
    - Jesus will spread His white robe of righteousness across our shoulders, which means we will be under His love and His care for eternity.
    - From that point on, Christ belongs to us, and we belong to Him forever!

Once we have received the free gift of salvation by God's grace alone, that issue is settled, once and for all, and forever. However, while our salvation cannot be lost by something we do or do not do, the crowns and rewards awaiting us at the Judgment Seat of Christ can be lost by what we do or do not do.

- 2 John 7-10 – ***“Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.”***

- Those who receive their full reward will have a greater reason to rejoice.
- Those who receive more crowns will have more crowns to lay at Jesus’ feet.
- Those who have achieved greater works will be given greater responsibilities in the new kingdom.
- While everyone’s cup will be filled, some will have earned larger cups by their good works during their lives on earth.

In Matthew 24:4-5, Jesus told His disciples that one of the signs of the end of the age would be spiritual deception. ***“Take heed that no one deceives you, for many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”***

- One of the major deceptions today is that a person can be a “follower” of Christ without having to believe in the essential doctrines of the Christian Faith and without having to fully yield their lives unto the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Today, lost people are presented the “historical facts” of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and then asked to “make a decision” regarding their faith in those facts.
- If a person can be saved from hell simply by believing the facts about the life of Jesus, without a full confession of their sin, or without a full surrender unto His Lordship, then saving faith requires no change in one’s moral behavior and, therefore, **living a life of righteousness is optional.**
- While such false teachings have weakened the effectiveness of the church in the world today, they will certainly be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ, **as many will hang their heads in shame for having such a shallow faith in such a glorious Lord.**

In Romans 10:9-10, the Apostle Paul codified the essential elements of a true soul-saving, life-changing salvation experience. ***“If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”***